

ALL TOGETHER NOW

By

Philip Middleton Williams

ALL TOGETHER NOW

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ALL TOGETHER NOW

For Nancy and Phil.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

Awards

First Place, The Playgroup LLC of Florida Playwriting Contest, 2017

The story continues...

ALL TOGETHER AGAIN

Ten years after **All Together Now**, Paul and Adam welcome the family back. It's a big occasion: Paul's fiftieth birthday and Fox's engagement party. But there are other things going on that threaten the celebrations, and it's going to be a long weekend in more ways than one. (4M 3W)

ALL TOGETHER AT LAST

Fifteen years after **All Together Again**, the family gathers to celebrate the life of one of them. For Fox's son P.J. and his boyfriend Will, it's a time of reckoning, and all of the family is facing decisions about the future. (6M 1W)

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

Five years after **All Together At Last**, P.J. and Will are planning their wedding when Will finds out about his family history, including his birth name and ancestry. He braces himself to meet his past and his future in the form of his biological father and half-brother. (6M)

ALL TOGETHER ALTOGETHER

Four Plays about a Family

The whole series – **ALL TOGETHER NOW**, **ALL TOGETHER AGAIN**, **ALL TOGETHER AT LAST**, and **WELCOME TO THE FAMILY** – in one book in chronological order.

Samples of the individual plays and the collection are available for perusal and licensing information at www.pmwplaywright.com.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

CHARACTERS:

PAUL HENDERSON: Late thirties, gay, college professor, in good shape.

ADAM CONNOLLY: Mid-thirties, Paul's partner; strong, with a dry wit.

FOX ENGSTROM: Fifteen, well-built, smart and polite.

JIM HENDERSON: Mid-sixties; Paul's father.

DOROTHY HENDERSON: Mid-sixties; Paul's mother.

JULIE ENGSTROM: Late thirties; Fox's mother.

PLACE and TIME: A home in suburban Miami. Labor Day weekend.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

ALL TOGETHER NOW was first presented as part of the PLAYte reading series produced by New Theatre of Miami at Mina’s Mediterraneo in Miami, Florida, on December 16, 2015. It produced by Ricky J. Martinez and directed by Steven A. Chambers and Erik J. Rodriguez with the following cast:

Paul.....Kenneth Averett-Clark
Adam.....Carlos Alayeto
Fox.....Jonathan Mitzenmacher
Jim.....Joel Kolker
Dorothy.....Joanne Marsic
Julie.....Nicole Quintana

ALL TOGETHER NOW was first presented in a full production by The Playgroup LLC at the Willow Theatre in Boca Raton, Florida, on March 2, 2018. It was directed by Joyce Sweeney; scene design by Tom Andrew; stage managed by Robin Paulive. The cast, in order of appearance, was as follows:

Paul.....Richard Weinstock
Adam.....Patrick Sheehan
Fox.....Eytan Deray
Jim.....David Ehrlich
Dorothy.....Brenda Aulbach
Julie.....Fran Friedman

ALL TOGETHER NOW

ALL TOGETHER NOW

ACT 1
SCENE 1

The scene is the living room of the home of Paul Henderson and Adam Connolly. It is a comfortable place in suburban Miami. It is open and airy. The furnishings are a mixture of antique and contemporary furniture, tastefully done but not extravagant. Upstage right is the kitchen area, open to the rest of the room, with a breakfast table nearby. Upstage left is a dining area with a table and chairs for four. Downstage right is a comfortable couch, chairs, and coffee table. Downstage left is a reading area with bookshelves and a small desk with a laptop computer. Off stage right is an exit to the rest of the rooms of the house; the front entry hall is stage left. The back wall has a large sliding glass doors and sidelights leading out to a patio and garden area visible to the audience. It is lush with plants and hanging orchids. At rise, it is morning on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend. PAUL and ADAM are in the kitchen going over a shopping list. Paul is in his late thirties, in good shape and has an easy-going manner. He is wearing a t-shirt, boxers, and no shoes. Adam is five years younger than Paul. He is strong, almost military in his bearing, but has a dry wit and makes a nice contrast to Paul's sometimes rash behavior. He is wearing jeans, a polo shirt and sneakers.

PAUL. *(Reviewing the list.)* Okay, we've got the salad, steak, and potatoes. That leaves us with a choice of asparagus or artichokes.

ADAM. Artichokes. Asparagus means hollandaise and that's a pain to make. And it makes your pee stink. With artichokes, you just steam 'em and dip 'em in butter.

PAUL. Right. And there's the cheese for appetizers. They like brie, but what do you think?

ADAM. I'll decide when I get there.

PAUL. Okay. Don't forget the crackers. And then there's the dessert.

ADAM. German chocolate cake. Already ordered.

PAUL. My favorite. Thank you.

ADAM. Well, yeah, you asked for it.

PAUL. Are you sure you want to do all of this? It's just a birthday party.

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ADAM. Well, we could do it at Chuck E. Cheese and have the clown sing “Happy Birthday.”

PAUL. Only if that’s the last thing you want to do in this life.

ADAM. How about if the clown is a stripper?

PAUL. A clown stripper? That’s creepy. And what’s the rush? It’s not until tomorrow night.

ADAM. I want to get all of the shopping out of the way before your folks get here. Y’know, we could have had a big party; invited all of our friends and stuff. You only turn forty once. But this is what you said you wanted: just a quiet dinner at home.

PAUL. It’s enough that my parents are coming to town to join in the festivities. When you turn forty, we can do all of that.

ADAM. We have five years to plan it, then.

PAUL. Right. Okay. How are we set for booze?

ADAM. That depends on what they want to drink.

PAUL. Scotch.

ADAM. That’s it?

PAUL. Yep. Just scotch.

ADAM. Any special scotch?

PAUL. Any scotch is fine as long as it’s The Macallan. You remember the last time they were here. That’s all they’ll drink.

ADAM. Expensive tastes.

PAUL. Dad always says “life’s too short to drink cheap booze.”

ADAM. What about the wine for dinner?

PAUL. Forget about it. Nothing you choose would be right, or if it is, we can’t afford it. I’ll just send Dad to the liquor store and let him graze. For him it’s like a visit with old friends.

ADAM. When are they getting here?

PAUL. Who knows? Mom just said, “We’ll see you on Saturday.” You know their routine. They got in last night and went straight to the hotel. They’ll linger over breakfast and then come over when they’re ready. They’re on their own timetable, and they assume everyone else is on it, too.

ADAM. Do we need to tidy up any more?

PAUL. I vacuumed and dusted yesterday, and besides, Mom will rearrange everything anyway. Just leave it.

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ADAM. (*Sarcastically.*) You're really looking forward to having them here.

PAUL. Over the moon. Can't you tell?

ADAM. They only come down once a year. We can put up with it.

PAUL. Yeah, but what if they decide to retire here? (*Sigh.*) It's just a couple of days.

ADAM. Y'know, it's not too late to just grab our stuff and head down to Key West to that little B & B on Fleming Street with the clothing-optional pool and a nice quiet room all to ourselves. Leave a note on the door for your folks – "Have a nice time, see you Tuesday."

PAUL. That would be nice, wouldn't it?

ADAM. When was the last time we did that?

PAUL. Been a while, hasn't it?

ADAM. At least a year, if not more. So, whaddaya say?

PAUL. If I said yes, who'd open up the gym?

ADAM. I could call Jason. He needs the hours. Oh, wait... damn, he's in Orlando this weekend.

PAUL. I have a faculty meeting first thing Tuesday morning and you have your VA appointments all next week and....

ADAM. I get the point.

PAUL. We'll go.

ADAM. It'd be nice if we could just go right now.

PAUL. Next weekend. I promise. I'll call that B&B first thing on Monday.

ADAM. I'm gonna hold you to that. (*He gets ready to go; grabs the list and car keys, then goes to Paul and gives him a quick peck on the cheek.*) By the way, I do have a present for you.

PAUL. (*Returning the kiss.*) Looking forward to it. (*They hug, and then Adam starts to leave. As he does, the doorbell rings.*)

PAUL. Oh, crap, they're here. Damn, their timing is terrific. You let them in and I'll go put on some clothes. (*Paul runs off Right to the bedroom. Adam goes to the front door and opens it. Standing there is FOX. He is a tall, well-built, good-looking young man in jeans and a t-shirt that are a little too small for him, dusty cowboy boots, and a baseball cap. He is carrying a worn knapsack, and he looks a little travel-weary, but he grins broadly when he sees Adam.*)

FOX. Hi! I'm looking for Paul Henderson.

ADAM. Well, you're in luck. We have one in stock.

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FOX. Are you...?

ADAM. No, I'm his partner, Adam Connolly.

FOX. Oh, okay. I'm Fox.

ADAM. Nice to meet you, Fox. Is Paul expecting you?

FOX. Um, no.

ADAM. Are you one of his students?

FOX. Uh, no. I'm sorry to just show up like this. I would have called but I didn't have his number....

ADAM. So, Fox, what are you...

FOX. This is a nice place. Did you guys build it?

ADAM. No, we bought it pretty much as is ten years ago. Made a few improvements; added the garden.

FOX. Wow, that's really beautiful.

ADAM. Thanks. (*Looks towards bedroom to see where Paul is.*) Can I get you something? Coffee?

FOX. Naw, I'm good. I had a Starbucks at the airport.

ADAM. You just got here?

FOX. Yeah.

ADAM. From where?

FOX. Santa Fe. I would have been here last night but there were thunderstorms and my flight was delayed getting out of Dallas.

ADAM. You came all the way from Santa Fe?

FOX. Well, I'm supposed to be going to New York.

ADAM. I think you made a wrong turn somewhere. This is Miami.

FOX. Yeah, I know.

ADAM. So, you came all the way here to meet Paul?

FOX. Sounds crazy, doesn't it?

ADAM. Well, he's kind of gotten used to the fan mail and the Twitter followers and the interviews, but I don't think he's ever had one show up at the door. Not a lot of World War II history buffs are teenage groupies.

FOX. Oh, I'm not. I mean, I've heard about the book and I saw the miniseries, but I'm not here because of that.

ADAM. Oh. Well....

PAUL. (*Off.*) Be right out!

FOX. That's him?

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ADAM. Yeah. (*Fox looks offstage with a sense of apprehension and expectation. Paul re-enters, wearing slacks, a nice shirt, and loafers.*)

PAUL. Hi, sorry, I was getting dressed and.... (*He sees Fox and stops.*) Uh, hello.

FOX. (*Nervously.*) Hello.

PAUL. Hello. (*To Adam.*) When you said you were getting me a present, I was thinking more along the lines of a book or a watch or something. You got me a cowboy?

ADAM. No, he showed up all by himself.

PAUL. Oh. (*Fox is staring at Paul. Paul gets rather uncomfortable.*)

PAUL. Can I help you?

FOX. I'm Fox.

PAUL. Nice to meet you...Fox. (*More silence, and Paul looks to Adam for guidance. Adam shrugs.*)

PAUL. Do I know you? Are you in one of my classes?

FOX. No.

PAUL. Well, then...? (*He pauses a beat waiting for an answer, but Fox is still staring.*)

ADAM. He says he came all the way from Santa Fe to meet you.

PAUL. Oh, really? I used to live in Santa Fe. (*Finally, Fox snaps to. He goes to his knapsack and pulls out a bulky and rather worn manila envelope. He holds it for a moment, and then looks at Paul.*)

FOX. You remember Julie Engstrom?

PAUL. Julie Engstrom? Yeah... sure. She and I were friends out there; I lived next door to her in a little duplex on Galisteo Street. She and her partner, um....

FOX. Denise.

PAUL. Right, Denise. Julie had just finished med school and was doing a residency at the hospital there. I was teaching at the prep school. We used to hang out together and share meals and if we got really adventurous, we'd rent a movie. So how do you know Julie?

FOX. She's my mom.

PAUL. Oh. I didn't know she had any kids.

FOX. She does.

PAUL. Really? So, you came all the way here just to meet me?

FOX. Yeah.

PAUL. Okay... Why?

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FOX. I'm your kid.

ADAM. What?

PAUL. What?

FOX. (*Pulling a piece of paper out of the envelope.*) Yeah. You remember, don'tcha? Mom and Denise wanted to have a kid and they asked you if you would be the donor and you said yes and so you did and then....

ADAM. Holy...

PAUL. My God. But we signed all sorts of documents terminating all parental rights and obligations. We got a really good lawyer to make sure that it was all set. Cost a small fortune. (*Fox pulls out a sheaf of documents and wordlessly hands them to Paul.*) Right. But it didn't happen. We went to the clinic three times and we went through all the motions but each time they said that they didn't implant. And we had a good cry, and then I got the job here and moved away. The last I heard from Julie was that she was working at a clinic on an Indian reservation. So how can I...? How can you...?

FOX. They froze a batch. The last one. After you left, they decided to try one more time.

PAUL. How old are you?

FOX. Fifteen. I'll be sixteen next March.

ADAM. You're big for your age.

FOX. Yeah, I kinda shot up over the last couple of years.

PAUL. (*Doing the math in his head.*) I moved here in May.... But how does she know....?

FOX. You were the only donor.

PAUL. It was supposed to be anonymous. The records were to be sealed. There were no records kept of my name or anything like that. I went to the clinic, I did my thing, I left. There were no names, just numbers. It was all very sterile.

ADAM. So to speak.

PAUL. So how did you find me?

FOX. Well, I always knew that I was an IVF baby. When I was five and asked Mom where babies come from and why I didn't have a dad like other kids, she said she went to the doctor and picked me out and that I was special 'cause she really wanted me. Then when I started to really figure out where babies come from, I asked who the donor was. She just said someone very nice. But then you got famous and Mom couldn't keep it to herself after you won the Pulitzer Prize. There

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you were in the New York Times, your picture, your biography, and then the book got turned into a miniseries. She brought me the paper, sat me down, and told me the rest.

ADAM. That was last winter. Why have you waited until now?

FOX. Mom got a grant to help develop health services for indigenous people in Central America. It's for two years.

ADAM. And you don't want to go.

FOX. I can't. They won't let her bring family. Or pets.

PAUL. What about Denise?

FOX. She's long gone. After Mom got pregnant, Denise decided that she couldn't handle it. She took off for Colorado, and the last we heard was that she's a deputy sheriff in a small town outside Boulder.

PAUL. She's a nurse. Or she was. We called her "Denise De-Nurse."

FOX. I only know what Mom told me.

ADAM. So, what was she going to do with you? Put you in storage with the car and the furniture?

FOX. Boarding school. Pinewoods Academy, Newburgh, New York.

ADAM. Jesus. When do you go?

FOX. Supposed to be there on Monday.

ADAM. This Monday? The day after tomorrow?

FOX. Yep.

PAUL. Does Julie know you're here?

FOX. I didn't tell her I was coming here, if that's what you mean.

PAUL. That is what I mean, and I think she'd probably like to know. She's probably worried sick about you.

FOX. I'm not supposed to get to New York until this afternoon. I already called the school and told them I missed my connection in Dallas and I'd let 'em know when I get in.

PAUL. I still think you should let her know.

ADAM. Wow, you've only been a dad for five minutes and you already sound like one.

PAUL. (*Glaring at Adam.*) Don't you need to go shopping?

ADAM. Are you kidding?

PAUL. Well, okay. Just....

ADAM. Just what?

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PAUL. Just.... Never mind. (*Paul stares at Fox for a moment then goes to the kitchen and pours himself a large mug of coffee.*)

ADAM. Hey, Fox, you sure I can't get you something to eat? Coffee? Juice? Milk? Breakfast? You like bacon and eggs?

FOX. I'm okay for now. I don't eat meat, anyway.

PAUL. That's right. Julie was quite the vegetarian. Wouldn't eat anything that ever had a face.

FOX. She's upgraded to fish now. But it has to be free range, not raised on a farm.

ADAM. You're pretty good-sized for someone who never had a cheeseburger.

FOX. Well, there's a lot of protein in other foods, too; rice, beans, soy. I do okay on that.

ADAM. Well, we're having chicken tonight, so if you're staying, we'll make some extra salad.

PAUL. Staying?

ADAM. For dinner.

PAUL. When's your flight to New York?

FOX. I don't know yet. I told 'em to leave that leg of the trip open. (*Fox looks around the house.*) So, how long have you been together?

ADAM. Twelve years.

FOX. Really? Married?

ADAM. No.

FOX. Oh, okay. So, how'd you meet?

ADAM. I was one of his students.

FOX. High school?

PAUL. College. I teach history at the university.

ADAM. Don't worry; we were both consenting adults.

FOX. That's cool. Where're you from?

ADAM. Little town in upstate New York. You've never heard of it.

FOX. So, what do you do?

ADAM. I've got a

PAUL. (*Cutting off Adam.*) He was in the Air Force, he owns a gym, and does physical fitness training and therapy for the VA. What's with all the questions?

FOX. I'm just trying to get to know you guys, that's all. I mean, you are my...

PAUL. Look, we should call Julie.

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FOX. It's still early in Santa Fe. You call now and you'll wake her up and she'll think it's some kind of emergency.

PAUL. Well, it is an emergency. You're fifteen hundred miles off course from where you should be. If you don't show up at the airport in New York, the school's going to call her and ask where you are, and she'll go nuts.

FOX. I called her last night. Told her I was stuck in Dallas and the airline was putting me up in the hotel there. She's fine.

ADAM. Maybe you should call her anyway. You don't have to tell her where you are.

FOX. *(Pulls a cell phone out of his pocket.)* It needs to recharge. *(Paul takes the cordless phone off the wall and plunks it on the counter.)*

PAUL. This one doesn't.

FOX. I will. Just not now. Can't we just talk?

PAUL. Okay, let's talk. *(A beat.)* Why are you here?

FOX. I just wanted to meet you. To see you. To find out who you are. That's all.

PAUL. Then what?

FOX. I don't know.

PAUL. Well, you're going on to boarding school, aren't you?

FOX. Well, maybe. *(Looks around the house again.)* How many rooms do you have here?

ADAM. Three bedrooms, two baths.

FOX. Sweet. Big enough place.

PAUL. Tell me about this school. Pinewood, you said?

FOX. I actually don't know much about it other than what I read about it on Wikipedia. S'posed to be a good place, but... Wasn't my idea to go there in the first place. Not really looking forward to it.

ADAM. You don't think you can handle it?

FOX. I can handle it. I do okay in school and I know how to take care of myself. Santa Fe has its share of snotty East Coast preppies. They don't bother me.

ADAM. So, what's the problem?

FOX. It's just... I don't know why I have to go there, that's all.

PAUL. If you can't go with your mom, you sure can't stay by yourself.

FOX. Why not?

PAUL. Because you're fifteen. You're still a minor. You can't drive....

FOX. I've been driving since I was eleven. Stick shift, even.

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PAUL. I mean legally. You don't have a job. You can't pay the bills.

FOX. Doesn't matter. She's renting the house out to some people to look after the place. They don't want me there, and I don't want to be with them.

ADAM. Don't you have any relatives you can stay with? What about your mom's family?

FOX. They're a bunch of Jesus-freaks in Minneapolis. They disowned Mom when she moved in with Susan.

PAUL. Who's Susan?

FOX. The one before Denise. They won't take me. To them, I'm "that bastard."

ADAM. Jesus.

FOX. That's what they say out loud. Behind my back I'm "that unnatural bastard, spawn of the sodomite."

PAUL. Wait, they know who I am?

FOX. Not by name. But Mom told them how she went through a fertility clinic with sperm donated by a gay friend. I wasn't there when she told them, but I hear it got kinda ugly. They disowned her all over again.

ADAM. So, if you don't want to go to that school and you can't stay in Santa Fe, then what?

FOX. How about I stay with you guys?

PAUL. Whoa. Wait just a minute.

FOX. Why not?

PAUL. Because until now I didn't know you existed.

FOX. I'm your son.

PAUL. Genetically, yeah. But as far as the law is concerned, you're a total stranger. It's no different than if I went to the sperm bank and did it just for the money and the free porn.

FOX. Look, if it's about money, I got that. Mom set up a trust account to pay for school and everything. Doctors make pretty good money in Santa Fe, so if that's the problem, not to worry. (*Pulls out his wallet.*) Look, she gave me two hundred bucks just for traveling and food and stuff.

PAUL. It's not that. It's... I don't know anything about you.

FOX. What do you want to know?

PAUL. Well, I don't know.... What kind of sports do you like? What books do you read? What makes you happy? Do you believe in God? What do you watch

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on TV? What makes you cry? Cats or dogs? Favorite car? Mac or PC? Coke or Pepsi? Boxers or briefs?

FOX. (*Without missing a beat.*) Baseball, Steinbeck, being with friends, not sure, whatever's on, injustice, dogs, Ford pick-up, PC, Coke, and briefs.

PAUL. (*Impressed.*) Well, okay then. Steinbeck, huh? You at least inherited my ability to remember things. Do you have a girlfriend?

FOX. No.

ADAM. Boyfriend?

FOX. No.

ADAM. I had to ask. I mean, it does sorta run in the family. Both sides.

FOX. I'm fifteen. I'm not supposed to be doing that yet.

PAUL. Says who? I started dating when I was thirteen.

FOX. Did you go out with boys?

PAUL. No.

FOX. Then it doesn't count, then. If you're gay and you go out with girls, what's the point?

PAUL. Dating is how you learn to get along with other people, learn to be polite, to care about someone other than yourself. It's part of our civilized society.

FOX. If you say so. I'm not really into that sorta stuff.

ADAM. Kind of a loner?

FOX. No, I gotta lot of friends. I've just never been into the rituals.

PAUL. Rituals?

FOX. High school dating is a socio-economic behavior pattern instilled in teenagers to reinforce stereotypes, promote premarital sex, and enslave women in the role of servant to men in preparation for their lifetime of playing the part of the submissive woman.

PAUL. You believe all of that?

FOX. I see it enough among the kids I know that some of it's true. Dating is something kids go through so that they can get around to making out.

PAUL. So, you don't believe that people do it because they like each other and might fall in love? It's all about sex?

FOX. Sure. That's all it ever is. When you finally got around to dating for real, wasn't that what you were looking for?

PAUL. (*Lying.*) No.

FOX. So, the first time you guys went out, what happened?

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PAUL. I don't remember.

ADAM. Are you kidding?

FOX. Oh, come on!

PAUL. I don't. We knew each other before we went out. It wasn't like a first date, anyway; we got together for drinks one night after the gym and....

ADAM. He had his hands on my belt buckle ten seconds after the door closed on his apartment.

PAUL. Well, so what? We were two consenting adults, attracted to each other. What'd you expect us to do, play Scrabble?

FOX. No. But see, it's not all about society and social interaction and all that crap. It's about two people getting together through a ritual that is basically foreplay in public. And I don't see what the big deal is about it, that's all.

PAUL. And you're not in favor of sex?

FOX. I'm not against it. I suppose I'd like to try it sometime. I know it sounds weird, but sex... I don't know. I mean, look at all the trouble it's caused just in my family alone, not to mention all the trouble everywhere else. Everything's about sex. Our entire culture and social interaction is all hung up on a basic biological function. And look at all the trouble it's caused. It's started wars, cultural divisions, killed millions of people through disease and jealousy.

PAUL. It's also inspired some of the greatest art, literature, and music known to man.

FOX. Sure, but the rotten stuff is a lot worse, and I am not really interested in it. Well, not yet.

ADAM. You got all of that from reading Steinbeck?

FOX. No. I go to a pretty good school. And we read a lot about sociology and anthropology and stuff.

PAUL. It might also have something to do with the way you came into the world.

FOX. What?

PAUL. You weren't conceived in the usual way and you grew up with.... (*Fox is scowling and Paul realizes he may have stepped in it.*) Never mind.

FOX. Look, just because I didn't start out life by shooting out of someone's, uh, turkey baster in the back seat of a station wagon and was raised by a single mom who happens to be a lesbian has got nothing to do with it. I don't remember how I got here. You don't know how I was raised. You weren't there.

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PAUL. You're right; I wasn't. But that was my turkey baster you came shooting out of.

FOX. Oh, well, that explains why mine is just average, then.

ADAM. Okay, you know what, you two have a lot to catch up on and I need to get the shopping done. (*Picks up the grocery list, car keys.*) Nice to meet you, Fox. (*Pointedly to Paul.*) We'll talk when I get back.

FOX. Sure. Thanks. (*Adam exits through the front door.*)

PAUL. I really don't want to hear about the size of your, uh, turkey baster, okay? (*Beat.*) This is a lot to take in, okay? Can I just absorb all of this for a moment?

FOX. Sure. (*Paul takes a deep breath then goes to sit on the couch.*)

PAUL. Wow.

FOX. Can I ask you something?

PAUL. (*Resigned.*) Yeah, sure, ask me anything.

FOX. If you had known about me, would you have been there?

PAUL. Sure, I would have.

FOX. Really? You signed all the papers. And then you took off for Miami.

PAUL. I was twenty-five, fresh out of grad school making shit money teaching history to high school kids. I lucked into a teaching job here that I've worked my ass off to get tenure for and had the great good luck to turn my PhD thesis into a best-seller. If I'd stayed in Santa Fe, I'd probably still be teaching at that school, still driving that old station wagon.

FOX. So why did you do it? Why did you say yes to Mom and Denise?

PAUL. It was their idea. They came to me. They asked me to help them. I said sure. I don't even remember thinking about whether or not I would be legally responsible. In fact, it was Denise who brought it up. She was the one who said that I had to sign the papers if they were going to do it. I think she wanted to make sure that I wouldn't come back some day and try to take custody of the baby.

FOX. Would you?

PAUL. Would I what?

FOX. Would you have taken custody of me? Y'know, like if Mom couldn't or something.

PAUL. Yeah, sure.

FOX. You say that now. But back then.... What did you know about raising kids?

ALL TOGETHER NOW

PAUL. Probably as much as your mom did, or anybody who starts a family. You don't come with an owner's manual, y'know. Based on how my parents did it, it's pretty much trial and error.

FOX. Got any brothers or sisters?

PAUL. No. I'm it. They, um, well, they kept trying, but I was it.

FOX. I know how you feel, then.

PAUL. Yeah, they did okay by me. As a matter of fact, they should be here sometime today.

FOX. Looking forward to meeting them.

PAUL. Yeah, well, I sure hope the feeling is mutual. I'm not sure how they feel about surprises.

FOX. Yeah. So. What would it have been like?

PAUL. What would what have been like?

FOX. If you had raised me instead of Mom.

PAUL. Well....

FOX. C'mon, just for grins.

PAUL. Well, for one thing, I wouldn't have named you Fox.

FOX. Why not? What's wrong with my name?

PAUL. Nothing. It's a perfectly nice name. It's just that in my family, kids are named after parents or grandparents. I'm named for my mother's father and my dad.

FOX. Then in my case, my name would be Pyrex Turkeybaster.

PAUL. I guess.

FOX. What would you have named me?

PAUL. I never thought about it. Baby names don't come up often in my circle of friends.

FOX. Well, now's your chance. What's my name?

PAUL. I dunno; I've always liked Michael.

FOX. Yeah, I know a few Mikes. (*Tries it out.*) Mike Henderson. I like that.

PAUL. You're not going to change it, are you?

FOX. Nah, just playing around.

PAUL. Good. Fox is a very nice name.

FOX. So, what do I call you? I mean, it would feel kinda weird calling you "Dad." Technically you are, but it's not like you earned it or anything.

PAUL. My name's Paul. That's fine. I don't care.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

FOX. Okay. So, now that we've gotten that out of the way, what about it?

PAUL. What about what?

FOX. Can I live here with you?

PAUL. No. You can't.

FOX. Just like that? You don't want to think about it?

PAUL. Don't have to think about it. Even if I wanted you to, it can't happen.

FOX. Why not?

PAUL. Because that's not how things work in the real world. This isn't some Hallmark Channel TV movie and the kid gets to choose what parent he gets to live with.

FOX. Why not? Why can't I have a choice?

PAUL. Because I'm sure that there are all sorts of people – including your mother – who will say you don't get to make that choice by yourself. You're fifteen. You're a minor. You have no rights. Hell, you'd have better luck if you were a fetus. I have no right to make a custody claim, and I'm pretty sure your mom would not go for it.

FOX. When was the last time you talked to her?

PAUL. Well, obviously, it's been at least fifteen years.

FOX. So, let's ask her. (*Finds a pad and a pencil and writes down a phone number.*) Call her.

PAUL. It's still too early.

FOX. She gets up early to do yoga.

PAUL. You didn't mention that ten minutes ago.

FOX. I forgot.

PAUL. Yeah, right. First, you're going to call her and tell her where you are. Then we'll take it from there. (*Picks up the phone and holds it out to Fox. He almost takes the phone, then chickens out.*)

FOX. You know what? I need to... can I, like, use your bathroom? Maybe get a shower? I've been traveling in these same clothes for a whole day now and I feel kinda....

PAUL. Oh, sure. Yeah. There's a bathroom in the guest room. Go ahead; it's in through there, first door on the left.

FOX. Great, thanks.

PAUL. You need anything? If you need something, just... let me know.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

FOX. Nah, I got a change of clothes and stuff in here. (*Fox picks up his knapsack and exits. Paul watches him go, then picks up the phone and dials. It takes a moment for the call to go through.*)

PAUL. (*On phone.*): Uh, hello, is this Julie? Hi, Julie, it's Paul Henderson.... Yes, that's right.... Good to hear your voice, too.... No, I'm in Miami, still.... Well, thanks.... Yeah, it was – quite an honor. Well, thanks.... Oh, you did? Well, great, thanks. I didn't know it was out on Blu-Ray.... No, I sold the rights, and so no, I don't make anything off it other than a royalty check whenever they run it again on Memorial Day. Anyway, um, listen.... (*Paul looks off in the direction where Fox exited.*) Got a minute?

SCENE 2

An hour later. Paul is at the desk, looking at the computer. The front door opens and Adam enters carrying several grocery bags and a box with The Macallan scotch bottle.

PAUL. Need a hand?

ADAM. Nope, got it. (*Goes to the kitchen, starts unpacking the bags.*) The kid leave?

PAUL. No, he went to take a shower and change clothes. But that was an hour ago; I think he's crashed.

ADAM. Huh. So, what's the story?

PAUL. I called his mom.

ADAM. That must have been an interesting conversation.

PAUL. Yeah. She wants me to put him on the first plane to New York.

ADAM. So are you gonna?

PAUL. All the flights today are booked or standby. The first flight out is tomorrow afternoon. I can get him on it and be back in time for the dinner.

ADAM. So, that's that?

PAUL. Pretty much.

ADAM. He just decided to take a side trip to Miami on his way to prep school just for the hell of it?

PAUL. Hey, kids these days....

ADAM. Yeah, I'm pretty sure there's a little more to it than that.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

PAUL. Well, he's sticking with the idea that he wants to come live with me.

ADAM. Yeah? And?

PAUL. I told him no, of course.

ADAM. You did?

PAUL. Of course.

ADAM. Why?

PAUL. Because...I just can't take in a fifteen-year-old kid like he's a stray dog or something.

ADAM. Why not? He's had all his shots and he seems to be housebroken.

PAUL. Well, it's a little more complicated than that.

ADAM. I know it is, Paul. So why did you make the decision so quickly?

PAUL. What?

ADAM. You just decided that without even thinking about it?

PAUL. What's there to think about?

ADAM. Well, the fact that maybe it's something we should have talked about before you decided to send him on his way.

PAUL. You can't seriously believe that I'd even consider it. It's not even worth talking about.

ADAM. Says you! Since when do you get to make a decision like that without even telling me?

PAUL. Oh, come on. It's not like we have to discuss everything, is it? I mean, when I get an e-mail from some Nigerian banker with a foolproof plan to make a million bucks, you want me to talk it over with you?

ADAM. The kid's not spam, Paul. We are supposed to make these kinds of decisions together. You didn't go out and buy this house by yourself, and the things we have we chose together. We talk about them, okay? Agreed?

PAUL. Yeah, well, I wasn't exactly thinking along those lines when a teenage boy showed up on my front step and announced, "Hi, I'm your kid" and said he wants to move in with me.

ADAM. Well, you don't just blow him off, either. Did you even think about it before you said no?

PAUL. Look, even if there was a way – somehow overlooking all the legal stuff and the custody battle and the whole proof of responsibility or whatever – since when did it ever occur to us that we might want to have a kid? It's not exactly what we were planning...or did I miss something over the last twelve years?

ALL TOGETHER NOW

ADAM. Have you ever thought about it?

PAUL. Being a parent?

ADAM. Yeah.

PAUL. Well, no. I'm not exactly programmed to think that way. (*A beat.*) Have you?

ADAM. Yeah, I have.

PAUL. Um, were you planning on telling me that?

ADAM. The subject never came up. But, yeah, I've thought about it. And I think I'd be a good one, too.

PAUL. Based on what? Being a platoon leader to a bunch of military recruits isn't exactly like being a father.

ADAM. What is?

PAUL. What is what?

ADAM. Like being a father?

PAUL. How the hell should I know?

ADAM. Exactly. How do you know that you wouldn't be good at it? That we wouldn't make a hell of a team as parents? With this one, most of the work's already been done. He seems like a nice kid.

PAUL. He is. He's bright, intelligent, well-mannered.... But then, we don't know anything about him. It all may be an act; after all, he's trying to win me over so he can live here. He might be doing drugs. You never know what kind of baggage people come with.

ADAM. God, listen to you; you sound like my dad. You want me to take him down to the clinic and have him pee in a cup?

PAUL. It might be worth it.

ADAM. Jesus, Paul, you never know with anyone. How much did you know about me before we moved in together?

PAUL. A hell of a lot more than I know about him.

ADAM. Three months. That's how long it was for us. From our first date to the day we signed the lease on that apartment in the Grove. To the day.

PAUL. That was different. We spent a lot of time together –

ADAM. Mostly in bed.

PAUL. No, not just that. We went to movies, dinners; we even drove down to the Keys and spent the weekend at the B and B.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

ADAM. And every other night we were either at your place or mine. We got to know each other pretty well, I'd say. You can learn a lot about someone in a pretty short time. So, what's the problem?

PAUL. It's a lot of responsibility. He's fifteen. He still has a lot of growing up to do.

ADAM. Yeah, I know. Don't you think we can handle it?

PAUL. You think we can?

ADAM. I'd like to at least have the chance to get to know him and for us to talk about it.

PAUL. I can't believe we're even having this conversation. Two hours ago, we didn't know he existed; now you want to have a serious discussion about him living with us?

ADAM. And I can't believe we're having a conversation about whether or not we should have a conversation about it. By the way, is there anything else about your past life I should know about just in case, y'know, anyone else should happen to drop in?

PAUL. Not that I know of.

ADAM. Are you sure? I knew you lived in Santa Fe, but you seemed to have left out the part about being the friendly neighborhood sperm donor.

PAUL. I would have told you if I had known something had come of it. I'm finding out about it the same way you are. Look, tomorrow afternoon he'll be on a plane to New York and that will be the end of it.

ADAM. It will? You plan on acting like he doesn't exist? Don't you feel any kind of obligation to him?

PAUL. What do you want from me? It would have been different if I had known about him.

ADAM. Well, now you do.

PAUL. So, what do you want to do?

ADAM. I think we should talk about it.

PAUL. Well, then, let's talk, because we don't have a lot of time. My folks will be here any minute and then tomorrow I have to put him on a plane.

ADAM. Okay. I say we let him stay.

PAUL. Just like that.

ADAM. You want to send him away "just like that." He's obviously not crazy about going off to boarding school, he's obviously not got a choice about staying in

ALL TOGETHER NOW

Santa Fe. He's reaching out. He needs us. We've got the room, it's not like we can't afford to feed another mouth, and... I think it would be good for us.

PAUL. How is it good for us?

ADAM. Well, as much as I hate to give any credit to those pompous arrogant "traditional family" freaks, there is something to be said about raising a kid and giving him a good home. It's not only good for him, it makes the parents realize they've got something else to think about other than just themselves.

PAUL. Are you saying we're missing something?

ADAM. No. I'm saying we might be better off to have something more.

PAUL. Jesus, did someone turn on Dr. Phil at the gym? Where do you come up with this stuff?

ADAM. Hey, you know what, I happen to think that giving a kid a good home is a good thing. Some kids never get that.

PAUL. Okay... now I get it. It's not about Fox. It's about your dad.

ADAM. What?

PAUL. That's it, isn't it? Your dad's an asshole so you have to make it up somehow.

ADAM. Oh, so now who's going all Dr. Phil? (*Fox, in clean jeans and t-shirt, appears in the doorway. He looks clean and refreshed.*) Leave my dad out of this.

PAUL. (*Seeing Fox.*) All right. Well, how're you doing? Get some rest?

FOX. Yeah, I kinda crashed.

PAUL. Must have been a long day and night for you.

ADAM. Want something to eat? I've got eggs, toast, bacon, anything you want.

PAUL. He's a vegetarian, remember.

ADAM. Okay, so skip the bacon.

FOX. Anything's fine. Whatever you want.

ADAM. Comin' up. (*Adam starts to make some breakfast for Fox, getting out eggs and milk and bread.*)

FOX. Look, I heard you guys... before I came in. I didn't mean to cause any trouble. I mean....

ADAM. Forget it. You didn't. French toast okay with you?

FOX. Sure. It's just that....

PAUL. It's just that it's a lot to take in on a Saturday morning, okay?

ALL TOGETHER NOW

FOX. I wanted to see who you were, that's all. And when the flight was cancelled and they were trying to get me to New York, they had a flight that made a stop in Miami, so I...

PAUL. Wait a minute. So, you just thought all of this up while you were sitting in Dallas waiting for a rebooking?

FOX. Sorta.

PAUL. (*Holding up the envelope.*) You had all of this stuff about me and the paperwork your mom and I signed. You just carry that around with you?

FOX. No. Well, yeah; I was gonna look you up sometime, y'know, maybe call you or come down over Thanksgiving or something. But the flight next to the one they wanted me on was to Miami, and so I just went to the lady at the counter and said, Hey, can you get me on the flight to Miami then to New York? I told her my dad lived here and that I hadn't seen him in a long time.

ADAM. Gave her the old "aw-shucks ma'am" routine?

FOX. Yeah.

ADAM. And she fell for it.

FOX. Yeah.

ADAM. I know where that comes from.

PAUL. So, this whole moving here and living here with me was just something you came up with on the spur of the moment.

FOX. Well, after I got to know you a little. If you'd turned out to be a jerk I wouldn't have asked.

ADAM. That's how it was with me, kiddo.

PAUL. So, you're not serious about it.

FOX. Yes, I am. I mean it. I want to stay here with you, and I'll do whatever it takes to make it happen. I'll work it out with Mom and the school.

PAUL. (*Snapping his fingers.*) Just like that?

FOX. Yeah. I mean, she trusted you enough once before. How much could it have changed in fifteen years?

PAUL. There's a big difference. And I already talked to your mother.

FOX. Oh, yeah? How is she?

PAUL. Well, all things considered, remarkably calm.

ADAM. Did you tell her he wants to stay here?

ALL TOGETHER NOW

PAUL. That didn't come up. I didn't think it was the right time to mention it. I told her you were on the next plane to New York. She offered to pay me to go along with you just to be sure that you were delivered at the school.

FOX. Cool. You gonna?

PAUL. No. I'm just gonna make sure that the airline escorts you to and from the plane and handles you like you were the Hope diamond.

FOX. Whatever. I'd better call her. (*Gets his cell phone and dials. He waits a moment, then hangs up.*) Voicemail.

ADAM. Why didn't she try to call you?

FOX. She will when she's ready. Right now, she's probably going through ten types of yoga to bring her center back to balance. Then she'll call. (*Adam brings Fox a glass of orange juice.*)

ADAM. Here you go. Squeezed it myself.

FOX. Thanks. (*Gulps it down.*) That's really good. I could get used to this.

ADAM. Yeah, thanks.

PAUL. They sell Florida orange juice in New York.

FOX. So, when do your folks get here?

PAUL. Any minute now.

ADAM. Yeah, I think I just heard a car door close.

FOX. So, you want me to hide out in the bedroom or something until they're gone?

PAUL. No, that has farce written all over it. I don't know. Haven't thought about it.

ADAM. How about "Mom, Dad, this is Fox. He's your grandson."

PAUL. You do know CPR, don't you?

FOX. I do.

ADAM. Look, there's no point in turning this into an episode of a bad sitcom. Tell them about Julie and Denise and the turkey baster.

PAUL. (*To Fox.*) And nothing about you wanting to live here. At least not yet. (*The doorbell rings and at the same time a woman's voice is heard off stage calling "Yoohoo!"*)

ADAM. Here we go. (*JIM and DOROTHY enter. They are in their mid-sixties, dressed casually but upscale; Brooks Brothers and Carol Reed summer attire. Jim is carrying a cloth bag with wine bottles. Dorothy follows.*)

JIM. Hello, men. Hell of a time getting here. Didn't think people did anything on Saturday mornings. (*Puts out his hand to Paul.*) Good to see you.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

PAUL. Here, let me get those. (*Takes the bag to the kitchen.*)

JIM. The white goes in the fridge, the red can stay out. (*To Adam, a tad stiffly.*)

Hello, Adam. Good to see you too. (*They shake hands formally.*)

ADAM. You too, Jim. Thanks for coming.

JIM. Wouldn't miss it. (*Jim spots Fox, who has moved off towards the bedrooms. Slight double-take.*) Wouldn't miss it. I remember my big four-oh. Had a big party at the skeet club with a band and everything.

ADAM. Well, just dinner here and maybe a trip to the Everglades or something.

JIM. Fine, fine. (*Dorothy has been looking through the patio doors to the garden.*)

DOROTHY. Oh, that vanda is in bloom. How lovely. I can't get mine to do anything. (*She goes to Adam.*) That's your work, I know. So good to see you. (*They exchange a quick hug.*)

ADAM. Thanks, you too. But actually, Paul's the orchid wizard.

PAUL. (*Coming out of the kitchen.*) Hi, Mom. (*They hug.*)

DOROTHY. You look good. Not bad for middle aged.

PAUL. Gee, thanks Mom, so nice to hear.

DOROTHY. I'm just teasing you.

PAUL. I know. So how was the trip?

DOROTHY. Exhausting. Even with the non-stop from Detroit it seems like we're never able to rest.

JIM. It took almost an hour to get our luggage and get the rental car. And when are they ever going to finish up working on that expressway? It's been under construction since you moved here.

ADAM. Your tax dollars at work.

JIM. But at least the hotel is nice and the TV works. Didn't know there were so many TV channels in Spanish.

PAUL. Bienvenidos a Miami, papi.

JIM. Well, I've been boning up on my Spanish at Loma Linda.

DOROTHY. Yes, although ordering a margarita isn't exactly the same as taking a class at Berlitz.

PAUL. So, how long are you staying?

JIM. We leave Wednesday morning. But don't worry. Your mother has things planned out to the minute for the two of us.

DOROTHY. We won't be a bother. I know you both have to work. We want to see that estate, Vizcaya, and then the tropical garden, and maybe even the zoo.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

PAUL. Great. (*Looks around for Fox.*) We're glad you're here and have things to do...

DOROTHY. Yes, we haven't really had much of a chance to explore. (*She looks around the room.*) The house looks just wonderful. I'm so glad you decided to keep it the way you.... (*She spots Fox.*) Oh, hello.

FOX. (*Stepping into the room.*) Hello. (*Everybody turns to look at him. Silence for a moment, then Fox looks at Paul, followed by Dorothy, Jim and Adam. Another beat.*)

PAUL. (*Forced casual.*) Oh, it's my line? Um, okay. Uh, Mom, Dad; this is Fox.

DOROTHY. (*Smiling, putting out her hand.*): Hello...Fox, is it?

FOX. That's right.

DOROTHY. What an interesting name. Nice to meet you.

FOX. You too.

JIM. (*Shaking hands but looking at Paul quizzically.*) Nice to meet you.

FOX. Same here.

DOROTHY. Are you one of Paul's students?

PAUL. (*Taking the plunge.*) Mom, you remember when you and Dad came out to Santa Fe for Thanksgiving?

DOROTHY. Oh, yes, and you were living in that tiny apartment downtown with the mud wall for a fence. Yes, of course.

PAUL. And you remember having Thanksgiving dinner with my friends Julie and Denise?

JIM. Yes, the couple next door.

DOROTHY. Oh, yes, and we had that vegetarian food shaped like a turkey. Well, at least it tried to look like one.

FOX. Tofurkey.

DOROTHY. Beg pardon?

FOX. Tofurkey. Tofu molded to look like parts of a turkey with turkey-like gravy.

DOROTHY. Yes. It was... interesting.

PAUL. Yes, it was. Anyway, Mom, Fox is Julie's son.

DOROTHY. Oh. Well, how nice. Are you a student at the university?

FOX. No, ma'am.

JIM. I don't remember her having any kids.

PAUL. She didn't when you and Mom were there. He came along later.

JIM. Oh. But I thought.... She and the other woman....

ALL TOGETHER NOW

PAUL. Denise.

JIM. Right, Denise.... I thought they were....

PAUL. They were.

JIM. Oh, so you're adopted?

FOX. No, I'm her kid, biologically and everything.

JIM. Oh. (*Still a bit mystified but polite.*) How old are you?

FOX. Fifteen and a half.

JIM. So, did your mom move here to Miami?

FOX. Oh, we still live in Santa Fe.

JIM. So, you're just visiting?

FOX. Uh, yeah, you could say that.

DOROTHY. How long will you be here?

FOX. Um...

ADAM. We're still working that out.

DOROTHY. Well, it's nice to meet you. How is Julie?

FOX. She's great.

DOROTHY. Well, you must tell her you met us.

FOX. Oh, I will, thanks. She'll be very glad to know I met you.

JIM. Oh, really? Why's that?

FOX. Well, she would like to know who...

PAUL. (*Cutting him off.*) Mom, Dad... there's something I gotta tell you.

DOROTHY. What is it, dear?

PAUL. C'mon, let's all sit down in the living room, okay?

DOROTHY. Paul, dear, you're frightening me.

PAUL. It's okay, Mom, just sit down, please? (*Dorothy and Jim sit on the couch.*)

PAUL. (*Deep breath.*) Okay, about sixteen years ago Julie and Denise decided that they wanted to have a baby. Biology being the way it is, they needed someone to be a donor. So, they asked me. I said sure, I did my, uh, thing at the fertility clinic, and they tried a few times. But nothing happened, so when I got the job here, I left and, well you know the rest. But they kept a batch of my stuff and after I moved here, they tried one more time and....

FOX. And here I am.

PAUL. Yeah. Here you are. (*Stunned silence from Jim and Dorothy. Finally, Dorothy looks at Jim, then Paul, then Adam, and Fox.*)

JIM. You mean... he's...?

ALL TOGETHER NOW

DOROTHY. My God. I'm a grandmother.

JIM. Just a second, Dottie. (*To Paul.*) How long have you known?

PAUL. About two hours.

JIM. What? Two hours?

PAUL. Yeah. Julie never bothered to... I signed off all my parental rights from the start. She had no obligation to tell me.

JIM. You had every right to know. (*To Fox.*) I'm sorry, but your mother should have told him. She had no right to keep it – you – from him.

FOX. I know, right? I kept asking her who my father was, but all she'd say was "It's more important to know where you're going than where you came from."

JIM. New Age bullshit.

DOROTHY. Two hours? You mean you didn't invite him? This wasn't pre-arranged?

ADAM. Nope. He just showed up here this morning.

DOROTHY. What? How?

PAUL. It's a long story, Mom. Look, he's here and ...

FOX. And I want to stay. (*Beat. Paul glares at Fox, Adam tries to hide a smile, Jim and Dorothy are stunned.*)

PAUL. Shit.

ADAM. Well, that cat's outta the bag.

JIM. You want to stay? For how long?

FOX. Forever, I hope. I've spent all my life with my mom, now I want to get to know my dad. I like him, so far.

JIM. But what about...?

PAUL. It's not gonna happen, okay?

ADAM. We haven't decided anything, okay?

JIM. But you can't just...

PAUL. (*Over Jim.*) Nothing's decided, Dad.

ADAM. (*Over Paul.*) We're thinking it over.

PAUL. (*Over Adam.*) But we haven't even talked about it.

JIM. (*Over Paul.*) But you boys don't even know anything about him.

DOROTHY. (*Over all of them.*) Fox! (*They all stop and look at Dorothy.*)

FOX. Yes, ma'am?

DOROTHY. Fox, dear, is this your first trip to Florida?

FOX. Uh, yeah.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

DOROTHY. Santa Fe has some lovely desert plants, but have you ever seen some of the tropical plants they have here?

FOX. No, ma'am.

DOROTHY. Come, let me show you. Paul and Adam have done a wonderful job planting in their back yard and patio. They have a magic touch with the orchids. *(She gets up from the couch, puts her hand out to Fox.)*

FOX. Yeah, sure, okay. *(Dorothy takes Fox to the patio doors, opens them, and takes him outside, closing the doors behind them. As the rest of the scene progresses, we see Dorothy showing Fox some of the plants, talking about them in dumbshow, Fox paying polite attention and nodding, occasionally asking questions. After a few moments, they sit on a bench and we see Dorothy and Fox talking, the expression on their faces reflecting that they are not talking about flowers at all.)*

JIM. How the hell did this happen?

PAUL. You're going to have to be a little more specific, Dad.

JIM. This guy shows up on your front door, says he's your son, and now wants to move in with you?

ADAM. That pretty much sums it up, Jim.

JIM. Well?

PAUL. What do you want from me? Like I said, I had no idea Julie went through with the last batch. Of course, I would have told you if I'd have known.

JIM. But how do you know he's even your kid?

PAUL. He's got all the paperwork. Copies of all the documents and release forms that we signed.

ADAM. He's for real, Jim. He even looks a little like Paul, don't you think?

JIM. What does Julie think?

PAUL. I don't know. She just found out this morning that he's here, okay? I called her, told her he's here, and I'm putting him on a plane tomorrow afternoon to send him on his way. And that, as they say, will be that.

ADAM. She's shipping him off to boarding school. He did a little bit of AWOL at the airport last night in Dallas and came here. And no, that is not that.

JIM. *(To Adam.)* So, you want him to stay... *(To Paul.)* And you don't.

ADAM. Pretty much.

JIM. Well, it's out of the question.

PAUL. Thank you.

ADAM. It's not out of the question if you haven't even talked about it.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

JIM. What's to talk about? Even if you worked it out with his mother, are you boys going to take on raising him?

ADAM. Jim, lots of couples have kids. They adopt them, or they already had them before they came out.

JIM. I know that. But what do you know about being parents?

PAUL. As much as anyone does, Dad. What did you know before I came along?

JIM. I knew I was ready for it.

PAUL. Oh, really? You were twenty-five, Mom was twenty-three. You met on a blind date, six months later you were making wedding plans, and seven months after that, I showed up. And nobody bought the line that an eight-pound seven ounce bouncing baby boy was "premature." So don't tell me that you were prepared. At least with this kid I won't be changing his diapers at two a.m.

JIM. At least we were married. Are you boys planning on doing that now?

ADAM. We've talked about it.

PAUL. Please, Dad, not that again.

JIM. Well, maybe now you should. Even if he doesn't live with you.

PAUL. Okay, one life-changing decision at a time, Dad.

ADAM. Wait a minute. What did you mean back there about "not that again"?

PAUL. He's been on my ass for us to get married. If I didn't know better, I'd say you two were in cahoots.

JIM. Why not?

PAUL. Just because we can doesn't mean we should. We've been together for twelve years, we own the house, we share everything, we are fine.

JIM. So why not go the final step? Marriage would be good for you. It would give you... stability.

PAUL. We have that. *(To Adam.)* Don't we?

ADAM. Sure.

PAUL. It's not like I'm going to just up and leave him for someone else.

ADAM. Good to know.

PAUL. Oh, come on, Adam, you know I'm not. And you're not either, right?

ADAM. No, I'm not. But every time I bring up the idea of getting married, you smile and nod and say, yeah, let's talk about it, and then you change the subject: "Oh, look at the kitty."

PAUL. Why should we have to fit into some heteronormative idea of the perfect relationship?

ALL TOGETHER NOW

ADAM. Oh, Jesus, you've been reading Salon dot com again.

PAUL. No, it's just that I don't think we need to let society and the Supreme Court decide how you and I live our lives.

ADAM. They already do, Paul. Might as well go along with it.

JIM. And if you're even thinking about raising that kid, you should at least provide him with a home, and marriage is a solid foundation.

PAUL. (*Glaring.*) Oh, really.

JIM. Absolutely. Your mother and I have been a source of strength to each other all these years. We've had our rough patches, but....

PAUL. (*Laughs hollowly.*) Rough patches?

ADAM. Hey, Paul, don't...

PAUL. Okay. Never mind.

JIM. So, if he did live here, what would you do?

ADAM. We've got room. The schools here are pretty good. We'd do something about temporary custody, I guess, assuming his mother goes along with it. I know a couple of good lawyers who can handle it. Hell, Miami's got enough matrimonial attorneys that they advertise on bus benches.

JIM. But what about the rest of it? How old is he?

PAUL. Fifteen.

JIM. He's still a kid, and don't think that when he's eighteen and off to college that it's all over. You're stuck for life. Meanwhile, you have to be parents. You can't treat him like he's your roommate. He's expecting you to be his dad... or dads. Whatever. He'll need boundaries. Life lessons. Socialization. Dating.

PAUL. Oh, no need to worry about that, Dad. He's given us his thoughts on dating. According to him, it reinforces stereotypes, promotes premarital sex, and enslaves women.

JIM. What?

ADAM. He's really smart, Jim. Scary-smart.

JIM. At that age they all are.

ADAM. No, not like that. I know what you mean, but this kid...

JIM. What about the neighbors?

PAUL. Huh?

JIM. You're not worried about what they'll think: two grown men suddenly have a teenage boy living with them, claiming to be their son?

PAUL. Oh, you have got to be kidding.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

JIM. Well, you never know what some people might think.

PAUL. I don't give a flying rat's ass what other people might dream up in their creepy obsession with other peoples' lives. God, Dad, that's... Oh, please don't tell me that's what you thought when you first walked in here and saw him.

JIM. Well...

PAUL. Oh God, you're kidding! How could you possibly even think such a thing?

JIM. I don't. But other people might, and other people might treat you and him like that, and no one wants that.

ADAM. Well, you know what, Jim? If they do, fuck them. I mean it. Let them have their bat-shit crazy dreams about what we do here and the hell with them.

JIM. But what if...

ADAM. There are bullies everywhere. There are bullies in school, bullies in the mall, bullies on TV with their Jesus-shouting and religious liberty crap and all that. And then there's the worst kind of bullies: the ones who beat the shit out of you because they say that it's for your own good and no son of theirs is gonna be a faggot.

JIM. I never said that.

ADAM. Didn't say you did. *(Paul goes to him and puts his hand on his shoulder.)*

PAUL. Hey. It's okay. It's not gonna happen.

ADAM. Damn right.

JIM. I know your dad was rough on you. Paul's told me.

ADAM. Yeah, well, I really don't think about him too much anymore.

JIM. He's still alive?

ADAM. Haven't heard he isn't.

JIM. When was the last time you saw him?

ADAM. The morning of my eighteenth birthday. I got up, packed a few things and walked out. He tried to stop me, but one right cross and he went down like a sack of old laundry. I went to the recruiting station, signed up, and that was it.

JIM. What about your mother?

ADAM. Died when I was twelve, and I'm pretty sure she was happy to go just to get away from him, from me, from it all. She spent enough time with booze and pills to escape when she was alive, so when the doctor told her she had six months to live, she probably asked him to move it up a little.

JIM. I'm sorry.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

ADAM. Thanks. Hey, at least I know how not to raise a kid. (*Dorothy and Fox get up from the bench, hug, and re-enter.*)

DOROTHY. Jim, get the keys.

JIM. What?

DOROTHY. Let's go. We're taking our grandson out to breakfast.

ADAM. I was just about to make him some French toast.

DOROTHY. Thank you, but never mind that. We're going over to that little breakfast place you took us the last time, and then we're going to give him a little tour; maybe go by the university or... well, I don't know, but come on, Jim, shake a leg.

JIM. All right, all right.

DOROTHY. We'll be back in a while. (*Guides Fox to the door.*) I want to hear all about this school your mother is sending you off to.

FOX. Okay... (*To Paul and Adam.*) See ya. (*Jim, Dorothy, and Fox exit. The front door closes. Adam watches them go, then turns to Paul.*)

ADAM. So?

PAUL. So.

ADAM. Well?

PAUL. Well, what?

ADAM. What do you think?

PAUL. About what?

ADAM. Don't mess with me, okay? You know what I'm talking about.

PAUL. I still haven't changed my mind.

ADAM. About...?

PAUL. What we were talking about.

ADAM. Fox living here or getting married?

PAUL. I meant Fox living here.

ADAM. Okay, let's start with that. It's three to one now. Four if you count your mom, and I think she's on board with it.

PAUL. No, Dad said it's out of the question.

ADAM. He only said that to goad you into it. Oldest parent trick in the book: to get your kid to do something, tell him he can't do it.

PAUL. Since when is it up for a vote? Why should anyone else decide for us?

ADAM. Exactly. Jesus, Paul, for a guy with a PhD, you're sometimes slow as hell. This is our decision. Ours. You and me. Makes no difference what your

ALL TOGETHER NOW

parents say. You're a day away from turning forty. You don't need to ask their permission; it's not like you're the one who's fifteen.

PAUL. To my parents I will always be fifteen. It's their way of holding on.

ADAM. Yeah, well, I missed out on that bit of Brady Bunch psychology.

PAUL. You know there's one other person who might have a say in all of this. Julie.

ADAM. So, we petition the court to have your parental rights reinstated. If necessary, we find out about adoption.

PAUL. You make it sound so easy, Adam. Do you really want to go through all of it? Hell, by the time we get done, he'll be old enough that we won't need to go through all of it.

ADAM. Fine. Then he can do what he wants and he can really decide to live here.

PAUL. Why are you so eager to do this? Where is this coming from? We know lots of couples who've got kids. When Ed and Hugh adopted Emily, we went to the welcoming ceremony. I don't remember you getting all goo-goo ga-ga over her and making like we should do the same.

ADAM. That was three years ago.

PAUL. So? What's changed in three years?

ADAM. A lot, Paul. When you and I met we accepted the fact that living together and sharing a house and a bed was as good as we could expect. Now we have it all. We can get married, I can put you on my VA benefits, you can put me on your university insurance and pension. And now we can be more than just us. We have room for him. Or whoever; if it's not Fox, maybe there's a kid out there who needs a home.

PAUL. What, you want to open up a shelter?

ADAM. Well, no, but I'll bet there are kids who could use a place.

PAUL. Like you did.

ADAM. Well, yeah.

PAUL. How very Hallmark Channel. Maybe they'll do a Christmas special about us.

ADAM. Oh, jeez, I knew you would make a comment like that.

PAUL. I'm sorry. Look, I get all of that. And for all your big muscle-bound goofiness, I like knowing that you think there's more to us than just sharing a bed and whatever else goes along with that. But I still...

ALL TOGETHER NOW

ADAM. Yeah, okay. (*Beat.*) We have time. He's not leaving until tomorrow. Between now and then, we have to make a decision.

PAUL. Okay.

ADAM. I'm going to go start the laundry. Even if our world has been knocked on its ass this morning, there's still life's little chores. (*Adam exits to bedrooms. Paul watches him go, then goes over to the patio doors and looks out into the garden.*)

PAUL. Oh, look at the kitty.

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